

NORTH AREA PANEL MEETING held at the COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.00 pm on 16 JANUARY 2007

Present:- Councillors R F Freeman, H D Baker, P Boland, M A Hibbs, S C Jones, V J T Lelliott, A J Ketteridge, J E Menell, M J Savage, and A C Yarwood.

Officers in attendance: - G Bradley Leisure & Community Development Manager, P O'Dell Director of Resources, J Pine Senior Planning Officer, C Roberts Committee Officer, J Starr Community Development Officer (Youth and Arts).

Representatives from the Parishes:-

Arkesden	K Barwood Mr R Higgins
Ashdon	G Skillings
Chrishall	K and D Eavsden
Great Chesterford	P Fentem
Hempstead	S McCarthy
Littlebury	P Farnsworth P Richardson Janet O'Sullivan M and H Morley J Higham E Sanders J Broomfield
Quendon and Rickling	R Bedborough
Radwinter	D Smith
Saffron Walden	M White (Town Council)
Sewards End	M Sandles
Wimbish	E Prowse and M Young
Also present	D Corke (LA21) C Stoneham and L Smart (Essex CC) C Ringett (Savills) Essex County Councillor S Walsh

NP46 QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

The Chairman Councillor Freeman welcomed all present and opened the question and answer session.

NP47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillor E Tealby-Watson.

Declarations of interests were made as follows:-

Councillor M Savage as a member of the Saffron Walden Partnership Board.
 Councillor A C Yarwood as a member of the Newport Parish Council
 Councillor J E Menell, as a member of the Littlebury Parish Council.

NP48 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 28 November 2006 were approved as a correct record subject in Minute NP40 to the amendment of the words "had received presentations" to read "would receive presentations".

NP49 TRAFFIC CALMING TASK GROUP

The Panel received a presentation by Mrs E Sanders with slides on the subject of traffic calming in villages generally and also with particular reference to Littlebury. She spoke about the need for the most effective speed deterrents but without negative effect on visual amenity (eg forests of signs), and provided many useful examples of better, subliminal, calming strategies which often involved less signage/road marking and more use of colour/texture change and promotion of caution by police presence, visible cameras, 20mph limits and the illusion of danger.

She recommended that police presence/cameras should no longer have to be preceded by a minimum number of accidents, and she described the advantages and disadvantages of different types of traffic volume restriction. In particular she felt that 'yellow buses' and 'one car per household' were policies needed to manage the traffic, as well as better manners and selflessness, from drivers. She asked the Council to set up cross party task groups with power and funding to implement the beneficial changes she had suggested.

The Chairman thanked her for her presentation. Questions were invited and the subject was discussed at length.

A resident asked whether the Panel would support an application to the Essex County Council to fund an experimental scheme in one village. Councillor Freeman said resources might be a problem and Mrs Sanders stressed that very effective work could be done with a cheap tarmac dressing

Councillor Mrs J Menell proposed that one experimental scheme be supported (subject to the consent of the appropriate Committee) to take place in one village in Uttlesford in 2007 to see whether natural calming reduced speed related traffic problems and that if it did so that the District Council support it being extended to the whole District.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 subject to the consent of the Environment Committee, one experimental traffic calming scheme be supported to take place

in one village in Uttlesford in 2007 to see whether natural calming reduces speed related traffic problems and that if it does so the District Council consider whether it should be extended to the whole District.

- 2 a bid be made to the Community Initiative Fund for a grant towards these works.

NP50 **AUDLEY END AND GREAT CHESTERFORD STATIONS – MOUCHEL PARKMAN STUDY**

The Panel received a presentation from the Senior Planning Officer about progress with the funding of the works identified by Mouchel Parkman. The Essex County Council Transport Development Manager was also present to answer Members' questions and she undertook to provide extra copies of the report summary for Panel members after the meeting.

It was explained that the figure £25k in the report should read £50k.

Councillor J E Menell mentioned that the village of Wendens Ambo was asking to have the mini roundabout removed because it was creating more problems than it solved. The need to consult residents of the village was stressed.

Councillor A J Ketteridge commented that the summary was a very useful one and asked officers to provide information to a future meeting about which were the agencies responsible for each heading of works and which were the funding bodies for each heading.

Dr Fentem pointed out that the population would probably increase, and it was noted that the funding of schemes such as cycle paths took a long time to be achieved.

RESOLVED that officers provide an annotated summary to a future meeting showing which agencies were responsible for each heading of the works and which funding bodies were the relevant ones for each heading.

NP51 **BUSES IN NORTH UTTLESFORD**

The Panel received a presentation from former Councillor David Corke about bus transport in North Uttlesford, explaining the minimum criteria for an area to have a bus service and examining the existing provision from this start point. Many areas did not meet their correct minimum service provision and he felt publicity of services was often inadequate or misleading. He thought that Park and Ride was a system which worked well, however another resident stressed the importance of good pricing and retention of services.

NP52 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY

The Panel considered a presentation by the Senior Planning Officer on work done towards producing the Core Strategy exploring options for growth and sustainability, and also the content of the associated consultation document which would be put to use in January/February 2007.

She explained that there had been a substantial input of views via questionnaire answers and responses recorded at workshops.

Members were particularly concerned with issues around infrastructure, growth dispersal strategies and promoting use of biomass.

RESOLVED that the consultation document be considered again at the next meeting in February/March.

NP53 CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON DISTRICT COUNCIL BUDGET 2007/8

The Director of Resources gave a presentation to the panel on Uttlesford budget consultation. He explained that questionnaires were sent out to parish and town councils and responses were in the process of being received. A decision would be made at Operations Committee meeting in February. Views of the public and the panel were still being encouraged to be brought forward as the decision was yet to be made. He stressed that there was potential to influence the long-term approach. He gave an overview of how the budget was set, which took into consideration government funding, inflation, new spending pressures and council tax; he then went on to explain the gearing problem which occurred within local government.

Currently Uttlesford had the lowest council tax of any district within Essex and the projected rise for next financial year stood at 4.5% which would be determined by members at the Full Council meeting in February. He explained that only 9.7% of council tax went into Uttlesford District Council services.

Uttlesford's grant from the government had gone up £70,000 for next year, but inflation alone would add £350,000 to the budget. The Council had already responded to public opinion and would not increase car park charges, but potentially £80,000 of extra income would be lost. The wheeled bin system would add an extra £140,000 to the budget next year and statutory and other pressures originally cost around £480,000. All of this meant that there would be a £1 million shortfall.

The Director of Resources said there had been a recent senior manager restructure, which made a saving £130,000 per annum.

The Area Panel consultation fitted into the budget process by giving the public the chance to propose putting more money in the budget to improve specific services(bearing in mind that this would need to be paid for) proposing

service reductions, cutting back on any planned new spending, proposing to amend fees and charges for services, changing the proposed council tax increase, and considering the devolution of more budgets to Area Panels.

A resident mentioned the need to provide accommodation for those on the Council's list of persons to be re-housed.

NP54 **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

The Area Champion, John Starr, presented a report advising the Panel of community development activities undertaken since the last meeting including establishment of an on-line Forum and the Uttlesford Futures annual assembly.

The Area Champion also drew attention to the North Area Panel mailing list and invited members to sign up.

RESOLVED that the Panel endorses the actions of officers to promote greater community capacity and well-being.

The meeting ended at 9.50pm.